WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY – Founded December 19, 1857 OCTOBER 1978

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society – Meets 8 p.m. second Monday of month at McKune Memorial Library. Election and installation of officers in November. The society is making its final selections of 600 pictures of Chelsea persons and places taken this summer by a CETA trainee for the society.

Dexter Historical Society – Special display of glassware loaned by local persons at museum during October and November. Museum open 1-3 p.m. every Tuesday and second and fourth Saturdays.

Christmas bazaar 10-4 p.m. Saturday, December 2, at museum.

The museum recently received the Claude Stoner collection of about 200 glass negatives of Dexter scenes circa 1890-1900. They hope to make photographs from them.

The society recently planted 55 trees and shrubs around the museum at a volunteer work session. They also have added a genealogist to their officer roster –Nancy VanBlaricum.

Manchester Historical Society – 8 p.m. fourth Monday of month at Methodist Church.

Milan Historical Society – 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday of month at Milan Community House.

Salem Historical Society – Bazaar planned Saturday, December 9, at township hall. The society was to begin the year's activities with a potluck supper open to all at 7 p.m. Thursday, October 19, at the hall. Turkey was to be furnished.

Saline Historical Society – 8 p.m. third Tuesday of each month at Saline High School library. A series of programs on restoring older homes was to begin this month, led off by Marcia Bigler of Ann Arbor's Old West Side Association who has done it herself. Next month the program will be on gardens, especially for older homes.

Ypsilanti Historical Society – Continuing its plan to have a general meeting program monthly this year, the society will meet 3-5 p.m. Sunday, November 19, at the museum. Mrs. Ethel W. Royce will talk about her button collection, started in 1941. She has buttons from five continents and buttons with scenes from opera and mythology and others featuring the famous and infamous.

Kathy Campbell will demonstrate making bobbin lace and Anna Anderson, tatting, from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, October 22, at the museum. November 12, Jean Jordan will explain how to make brass rubbings and display those she made in England.

GENEALOGY LIBRARY NOW OPEN TO PUBLIC; MEETING PLANNED

Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County will meet at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, October 22, at Washtenaw Community College. Those with problems are invited to call Secretary Mary Lou Barry at 769-5452 in advance to facilitate finding answers. A 1 p.m. help session is planned too.

The society library is now shelved at WCC and may be used there by anyone during library hours: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday –Thursday; 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Friday; and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday during the school year.

BOOK COLLECTOR TO TELL OF HIS ADVENTURES AT OCTOBER MEETING

Book collecting is something Dr. John C. Dann has "in his blood" and now as director of the U-M Clements Library of early American history he is doubly involved.

He will speak on "Adventures in Book Collecting" at the Thursday October 26 WCHS meeting at 8 p.m. in the main floor lobby of Great Lakes Federal Savings.

As director his primary function is to purchase materials for the library but he started collecting long ago, inspired by his grandfather who was a collector.

A native of Delaware, he graduated from Dickinson College in Pennsylvania and took his graduate work at William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. His book, "The Revolution Remembered," based on pension applications of Revolutionary veterans, is to be published next year.

POSTAL HISTORY IS TOPIC

Dr. Frank Whitehouse will talk about "The Early Postal History of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County" at the November 16 WCHS meeting. Please note the meeting is a week early because of Thanksgiving.

FOREST HILL WALKING TOUR SET OCTOBER 29

The Ann Arbor Historic District Commission will sponsor walking tours of Forest Hill Cemetery at 2 p.m. Sunday, October 29, starting from the gatehouse. A 50 cent per person fee will cover cider and doughnuts to be served afterward at Stockwell Hall.

TOMBSTONE TOUR TURNS UP:

PUBLISHER BURIED UNDER BOOK, WOMAN WHO DIED FEBRUARY 31, STONE DEPICTING DECEASED'S DEATH UNDER RUNAWAY WAGON

"HUNDREDS DEAD IN LOCAL CEMETERIES" the headline proclaimed. It was the 1933 April Fool's Day edition of *The Michigan Daily*, U-M student newspaper.

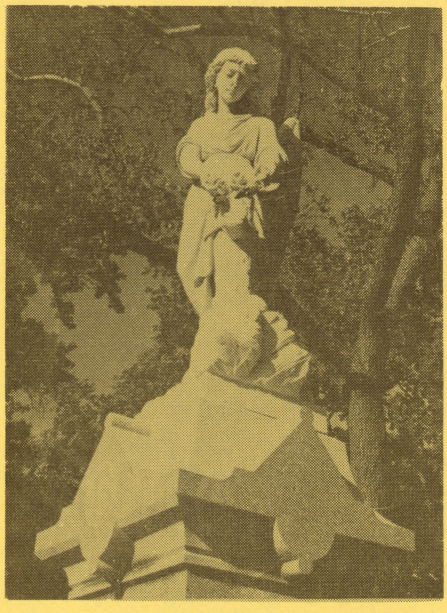
With it, Wystan Stevens introduced his slide talk on "Local Tombstone Art" at the September WCHS meeting. He then took his audience on a leisurely tour via slides through some local cemeteries pointing out the typical here, the unusual there.

He ran across that edition of *The Daily* when he was summer librarian there in 1964. That tabloid size edition was a lampoon of *The New York Daily News*, he noted, with its "scare headlines —see story on page 13" style of journalism. On the back of that issue, the undergraduate humorists said then 70-year-old University Hall had burned down with a total loss of $1.37.

University Hall was completed in 1873, he said, a year before Ann Arbor's Forest Hill Cemetery gate and gatehouse were built. "Gothic was a hugely popular style right after the Civil War and we have a good example of Gothic Revival there."

Ann Arbor's other large public cemetery, the old fifth ward cemetery north of the river, now known as Fairview, has monuments in it older than the cemetery itself. A lot of the very early slab tombstones were originally in Felch Park where Power Center is now. That was the site of the original public cemetery in Ann Arbor and all of the stones were moved in 1891. A few were taken by family descendants to other cemeteries including Forest Hill but most ended up in neat rows in the back of Fairview.

Those very early slab stones are rather severe with not much decoration. They are typical of the style of New England stones a hundred years earlier. They mark the graves of some of Ann Arbor's pioneers. Among them are David Lord, the first physician on the north side and Zenas Nash "under his weeping willow."



Photos by Wystan Stevens

ANGEL SCULPTURE
Watches over child's grave.

Also in Fairview is Dr. Daniel Kellogg, the clairvoyant physician of Broadway in Lower Town, Stevens said. "He would go into a trance and diagnose his patients and it wasn't necessary for them to be present. All he had to have was the name and address and the ordinary fee which went up quickly from fifty cents to one dollar, two dollars and so on.

"Then he would prescribe medicines which he himself prepared. When he sensed that the patient was running low he would prescribe more. I wonder if they ever got well."

Also in Fairview is a monument to Civil War soldiers from the fifth ward. "It was the first Civil War monument erected in Ann Arbor, in 1874 I believe, about forty-two years before the one on the Courthouse lawn. The Courthouse 'soldier' is now in Forest Hill."

"Bethlehem Cemetery is another lovely shady spot and I should have had some pictures of St. Thomas Cemetery here tonight but I didn't get all my slides processed. We'll have to add those at a later time."

One of the most unusual monuments in Bethlehem Cemetery is for "Our Daisy," 16, which has a photograph of the deceased on the stone. There aren't many of those around here, he noted.

He showed two others with photographs—a recent tombstone in the Catholic cemetery in Dexter and a recent tombstone with a photo of someone who had died a long time ago. The family had apparently replaced a deteriorating old stone.

The Samuel Feinberg monument in Forest Hill had a photograph until recently vandalized. It is one of the most beautiful in Forest Hill in having a sculpture resting on it. The only other sculpture there, is the Bird child monument near the cemetery entrance, a full-figure of an angel.

There are similar sculptured angels in Fairview, St. John's Cemetery in Ypsilanti and Riverside Cemetery in Clinton. Other stones have angels carved into them. Little angels are practically a stock item for a child's grave, he commented.

He found sculptures in Tecumseh from 1912 and the 1870's, the latter having the more standard heroic stance of the post-Civil War period.

The Bond family monument in Forest Hill incorporates what he believes is an imported piece of Oriental sculpture not made for cemetery use.

Another Forest Hill monument has a little door with a little key and an inscription from Victor C. Vaughn, former dean of the U-M

medical school, "The highest duty and the most exalted privilege that comes to man is to labor for the uplift of his race."

Of course there are a number of well-known persons whom one runs across. Some examples are Orrin White, the first settler in Ann Arbor township, a year before John Allen and Elisha Walker Rumsey founded Ann Arbor.

Rumsey's own grave is marked by a slab flat on the ground. "He is the only one of the four founders whose grave is here."

Solon Cook who ran Cook's Hotel downtown in early years.

Benajah Ticknor of Cobblestone Farm and Ebenezer Wells who was Ann Arbor's Civil War mayor, a physician, and the man for whom Wells Street was named by his brother-in-law, J. D. Baldwin. Wells lived in the Wells-Babcock house on Division Street.

The Mack family. Mack's Department store was **the** department store in Ann Arbor for a long time. Mack School was also named after this family.

Filibert Roth, early U-M forestry professor for whom the U-M forestry camp in the Upper Peninsula is named. His stone has an engraved oak branch and acorns and the inscription, "His work lives."

Elizabeth Russell Dean, "another name associated with trees in Ann Arbor."

The Rentschler monument has the autograph made famous by all the photographs he signed during his career.

Henry Bliton, turn-of-the-century building contractor in Ann Arbor, is buried in Saline as is Cliff Stang, the only policeman in Ann Arbor to be shot and killed in line-of-duty. He ran into the Conlin and Wetherbee Clothing Store while it was being held up in the 1930's.

Olivia Bigelow Hall, an acquaintance of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton of the Woman Suffrage Movement, also a turn-of-the-century land

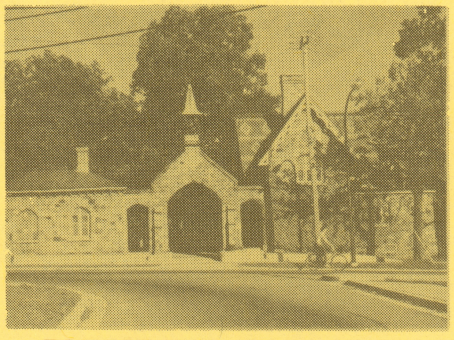
JOHANN GEORG MÜLLER
Died under wagonwheels.

developer who named Olivia Avenue after herself. Her granddaughter, Mrs. Hayden, is a member of the Society. An urn bears her name and her husband's, Israel Hall.

The urn is a very common symbol in cemeteries, he noted. A variation is a birdbath. He showed other tombstones carved with birds enjoying such a bath, another showing a bird carrying off a wreath, an eagle on a Civil War veteran's grave and the grave of another Civil War veteran in Ypsilanti named Thomas Chicken. Another veteran's monument had two cannon incorporated in it.

Lambs are commonly used on children's graves, symbolizing innocence. One in Ypsilanti had the child's name on the lamb itself. Another for "Willie" had the boy's pet dog depicted. The Deubel stone has a dog peeking out of the vegetation.

Washtenong Memorial Park has no stones. It is a post World War II park and the concept is to simply have broad lawns which are easily maintained but not as interesting to antiquarians.



FOREST HILL GATEHOUSE
Gothic Revival, built 1874.

Other forms of monuments use classical columns; an arch signifying completion of life; a farewell handshake; hand pointing upward to presumed destination of the deceased. A variation is a hand pointing down, holding a piece of chain—the broken chain of life, or a hand pointing to a text or an open Bible.

Decorative carvings include vegetation, flowers, ivy, a sheaf of wheat and, in Saline, a caduceus for a Civil War physician.

In the 1880's there was a brief period of favor for metal monuments, he noted, showing examples in Forest Hill and Clinton.

Tree stump or trunk monuments appear in almost every cemetery. Fairview has three in a row.

"Probably one of the most unusual stones I've come across is for Johann Georg Müller in Forest Hill. He died in the 1850's when run over by a wagon pulled by runaway horses. The stone shows him lying under the wagon and the horses rearing up."

In Bethel Church Cemetery in Freedom township, the stonecarver has Dorotha Schneider who died in 1881 "performing the remarkable feat of expiring on the 31st day of February."

Junius Beal, longtime regent of The University of Michigan and a publisher, is buried under a book. This also reminds one of the books outside the home of his daughter, Mrs. Jacobs on Berkshire, two books stacked up and used by the Beal family as a carriage step.

One Forest Hill monument has a variation of an Egyptian pyramid. Benches are not uncommon. There's one for a World War II veteran in Forest Hill, "but for real rest you might want an easy chair such as this one in Tecumseh."

The Kempf mausoleum for Reuben Kempf the banker, not Reuben Kempf the musician who was his nephew, is probably one

of the most imposing structures in Forest Hill. You can look through the door and see a stained glass window. Highland Cemetery in Ypsilanti has a very elaborate mausoleum for the Starkweathers near the entrance—a nice example of Romanesque revival.

Sign in Fairview Cemetery photographed by Eck Stanger, 1936.

NOTICE

Everyone is welcome to visit these grounds in day time, but not after sunset. They are not a public park or playground. Children are prohibited from romping about the grounds, and picnic parties are forbidden. Dogs will not be allowed upon the grounds. The picking of flowers is strictly forbidden. Horses should never be left without hitching. Posts have been provided, and the hitching of horses to trees is forbidden.

By Order of the Common Council

Some stones record where the deceased was originally from. Also one often sees little plaques that read "Perpetual Care" but one in Tecumseh reads "Perpetual Care for 400 Years."

He noted examples of broken, weathered and vandalized stones. "Some of it could be weathering—the groundswell that Robert Frost wrote of, that would not leave one stone upon another, but some of it is just out and out deliberate, cruel vandalism. There are a lot of examples of this now in Forest Hill. It fills one with outrage."

The Hyde family plot with bi-colored stones has been vandalized. "I've never seen any others that had printed biographies behind thick glass. The vandals stand there and chip away until it's all broken. Only one is intact of perhaps half a dozen."

"Fortunately there are those who appreciate cemeteries such as members of the Genealogical Society pictured reading and recording the Lutheran Cemetery in Dexter last summer, "Girl Scouts holding a patriotic observance and 1977 Memorial Day ceremonies in Chelsea.

After the genealogists finished, they had a little picnic as the folks in Boston did in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in the 1840's and 50's.

In preliminary remarks, he noted that early cemeteries were usually in the church yard. Mt. Auburn was the first memorial park emphasizing lawns and trees—a place of beauty where one might picnic. Forest Hill in Ann Arbor and Highland in Ypsilanti were the first "park" cemeteries in Washtenaw County.

He referred those interested in cemetery art to two volumes—*Memorial Art, Ancient and Modern* by Harry Bliss in the U-M graduate library and a recent Dover book, *Victorian Cemetery Art*, in local stores.

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP PLANNED IN YPSILANTI

The Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County and Ypsilanti Historical Museum will co-sponsor a genealogy workshop from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, October 28. It will begin at the Ypsilanti Public Library with talks on how to get started. Leona Berry of Eastern Michigan University will talk about their archives and how to use them.

After the 10:30 coffee break, participants may go to the museum and hear Ypsilanti Historian Foster Fletcher speak or stay at the library for further discussion. The library will give out bibliographies of its relevant materials.

AND HE WAS ACQUITTED

In Chicago recently a prisoner was tried before a jury for stealing a Ford. His lawyer made the following plea:

"Gentlemen, my client admits that he stole the machine, but he was drunk. The evidence shows that he took this Ford from between a Pierce-Arrow and a Packard. Does not that show that he must have been drunk?"

Quoted from *Ford Smiles: All The Best Current Jokes About A Rattling Good Car*, Carleton B. Case, Shrewesbury Publishing Company, Chicago, 1917.

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WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

8 P.M., THURSDAY

~~MAY 25, 1978~~

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